

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: JULY 20, 2016

TO: MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

FROM: CARRIE SANDERS, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, T&ES

SUBJECT: AGENDA ITEM #4 – SMART SCALE GRANT PROJECTS

ISSUE: Review of draft projects proposed to be submitted to the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and Department of Rail and Public Transit (DRPT) for FY 2022-FY 2023 SMART SCALE Funding (formerly House Bill Two [HB2] Funding).

RECOMMENDATION: That the Transportation Commission endorse the following projects (projects would be submitted individually and prioritized in the following order):

- 1) West End Transitway - \$20,000,000
- 2) DASH Bus and Facility Expansion – \$7,000,000
- 3) Traffic Adaptive Signal Control Fiber-Optic - \$7,000,000
- 4) Backlick Run Trail - \$3,882,000
- 5) Van Dorn Multi-Modal Bridge - \$10,000,000

BACKGROUND: In 2014, HB2 was signed into law, and in June 2016, the program was renamed SMART SCALE. SMART stands for System Management Allocation of Resources for Transportation and SCALE stands for the six road project scoring attributes: Safety, Congestion mitigation, Accessibility, Land use, Environmental and economic development. SMART SCALE requires the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) to develop and implement a quantifiable and transparent prioritization process for making funding decisions for capacity enhancing projects within the six-year improvement program. The goal of SMART SCALE is to ensure the state invests limited tax dollars into projects that meet critical transportation needs. At their meeting on June 14, 2016, the CTB approved the FY 2017-2022 Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP). The \$14.6 billion SYIP includes \$1.6 billion for 163 SMART SCALE projects across the Commonwealth. All 163 projects in the program are fully funded, including details for design, right-of-way, and construction. As part of this allocation, the City received \$5,295,000 in SMART SCALE funding for the Old Cameron Run Trail, \$7,000,000 for the citywide Traffic Adaptive Signal Control project, and \$1,000,000 for the Broadband Link for West Eisenhower Ave project.

The second round of SMART SCALE will be for projects seeking funding for FY 2022 – FY 2023. The application period will open on August 1, 2016 and all applications will be due by September 30, 2016. After applications are submitted, staff from VDOT and DRPT will screen candidate

projects to determine if they qualify to be scored. Selected projects will be scored in the fall and winter 2016. In January 2017, a list of all submitted projects and their scores will be submitted to the CTB and will be posted on-line. In April or May 2017, the draft Six Year Plan will be released by the CTB, followed by public hearings and a public comment period to gather input. The CTB is expected to make its final decision on which projects to fund through the second round of SMART SCALE in June 2017.

The following factors will be used to score submitted projects: congestion mitigation, economic development, accessibility, safety, environmental quality, and land use. Different weights will be assigned to such factors based on a project's location within a region of the state. Within Northern Virginia, congestion mitigation is the highest weighted factor at 45%; land use at 20%; accessibility at 15%; environmental quality at 10%; economic development at 5%; and safety at 5%.

DISCUSSION: Staff has developed the following list of projects, in order of priority, based on the guidelines and criteria outlined in the SMART SCALE process. Staff would like the Transportation Commission's endorsement of the following project list:

- West End Transitway - \$20,000,000 – Will provide permanent Transitway improvements through Southern Towers and transit center enhancements.
- DASH Bus and Facility Expansion – \$7,000,000 - DASH bus fleet expansion and facility expansion to accommodate increased bus fleet, provide expanded services on existing routes and new services on new/restructured routes.
- Traffic Adaptive Signal Control Fiber Optic - \$7,000,000 - Project will improve traffic flow through the City of Alexandria by implementing a traffic signal system that can optimize traffic signal operation based on the actual traffic flow in real-time.
- Backlick Run Trail - \$3,882,000 - Extend the existing Backlick Run Trail to the west along the north side of Backlick Run to the Alexandria / Fairfax County line. This project is recommended in the Eisenhower West Small Area Plan, and is also a priority trail project in the Pedestrian and Bicycle chapter of the Transportation Master Plan. This project is partially funded in the FY16-25 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) budget.
- Van Dorn Metro Multi-Modal Bridge - \$10,000,000 – This project is for a bridge connection between the Van Dorn Metrorail station and S. Pickett Street. The bridge will accommodate bicycles, pedestrians, high capacity transit (as part of the future West End Transitway), and potentially motor vehicles. This project was initially identified in the Landmark / Van Dorn Corridor Plan, and further studied and recommended in the Eisenhower West Small Area Plan. The project is partially funded in the City's FY16-25 CIP budget. The requested budget would be used for design and right-of-way acquisition.

After receiving feedback from the Commission regarding potential Smart Scale projects, the Telegraph Road ramp project was removed from consideration for this particular funding source and since it is not yet included in any City transportation plans. Based on additional discussion, the project would likely not meet the project-readiness requirement at this time.